

The Case of the CURIOUS FISHERMEN

FEATURING
MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Clue of the Left-Handed Man Solves a
Murder and Leads Mr. District Attorney
to a Much More Important Conspiracy



FICTION

ON THE face of it, there was no case. Just because young Bill Howell insisted that his uncle, Captain Joe Palmer, was left-handed was hardly reason to press an investigation.

Mr. District Attorney, a tall, vigorous, keen-faced man, listened carefully as Bill, who was about 16, told how "Cap" Palmer had gone to sea with eleven fishermen on a regular cruise and how the boat had been found next morning with all aboard, including the captain. But "Cap" was dead and he was Bill's uncle. The police of the little fishing-village agreed that "Cap" had died accidentally. It seemed that his right arm had caught in the craft's engine some way and became mangled. He died during the night because none of the fishermen knew first aid and none knew how to pilot the boat ashore. It was tragic but accidental.

"I don't care what they say, Mr. District Attorney," said Bill earnestly. "Uncle Joe hasn't been able to use his right hand for years. How could he get it caught in the engine, then? There's something wrong . . ."

The D. A. knew "Cap" Palmer; in fact, he'd fished from the captain's boat during vacations. Harrington, the Chief's assistant, knew him, too. And they both knew the boy.

Bill Howell was tall for his age and his grin was typically American—that is, when he grinned. He wasn't grinning today. He was very serious. The D. A. hated to let him down and looked at Harrington for help. But Harrington was looking out the window. The D. A. looked at Miss Miller, his attractive secretary, but she was fussing at her eyes with a handkerchief. Bill's explanation had been touching because Bill had loved his uncle.

"I'll tell you what, Bill," the District Attorney said at last, "I wish you'd keep on snooping around. Make your own investigation, and if you



MR. D. A., portrayed by Jay Jostyn (above), is puzzled when eleven men go out to sea on a fishing-party and twelve return

come up with anything tangible, get in touch with me. I promise I'll come down there at once. But honest, Bill, I can't go ahead with an investigation on the mere statement that your uncle was left-handed."

The lad stood up, thanked the D. A., shook hands with him and Harrington and nodded to Miss Miller as she showed him to the door . . .

The case was forgotten for two days, but was brought to the D. A.'s attention again when young Howell called long-distance from the little fishing-village.

"I think I've uncovered some—some very important evidence," he said.

"What is it?" the D. A. asked. "It's a roll of film that I found on the boat," the boy explained. "I'd like to have you see it, sir, as soon as possible!"

"What bearing does this film have on your uncle's death?"

"For one thing," the boy replied, "I think it'll prove that he was murdered, but it leads to something even bigger than that! If you say so, I'll come to the city right away."

The D. A. told the lad that hardly

would be necessary. He explained that if the clew was as important as Howell indicated, he would come down to his village. The boy thought that was swell, and said he'd do some preliminary work before the D. A. arrived. He said he had the addresses of the passengers aboard the boat at the time of his uncle's death and would check to see if they were correct. The D. A. said that could wait and told Bill to meet him at his uncle's fishing-boat.

"And, Bill," he added, "watch out for yourself. Just stay put until we arrive . . ."

It took about three hours to make the drive. Harrington and the D. A. knew the place well, having spent

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SECRETARY and special investigator for Mr. D. A. is Miss Miller. Vicki Vola plays the role on the air

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many happy hours fishing in the sound. Harrington drove the car to the spot where Captain Joe Palmer's boat was moored, and the D. A. pointed it out to Miss Miller as Harrington brought the machine to a stop.

It was dark and a fog had come in. Miss Miller shivered slightly at the mournful sound of a fog-horn out in the bay. The waterfront was deserted and lonely. The mist swirled about them as they walked toward the small fishing-craft. The footsteps on the wooden pier sounded hollow and Miss Miller unconsciously drew closer to the District Attorney. Harrington whistled to attract young Howell's attention aboard the small craft, but there was no answer.

They went aboard and Harrington whistled again. The District Attorney called down the tiny companionway. The boat was empty. The fog closed in tighter. The District Attorney and Harrington searched the boat for young Howell, then came back and stood beside Miss Miller. The D. A. frowned. He told Harrington to take

THE CAST

The Character	The Player
Mr. District Attorney	Jay Jostyn
Harrington	Len Doyle
Miss Miller	Vicki Vola
Ludlow	Peter Cappell
Bill Howell	Clifford Carpenter
Paul	Alan Devitt

the car to the police station and get the names of the passengers aboard the night Palmer died.

"Meanwhile," he said, "Miss Miller and I'll look the boat over. I'm worried about that boy."

Harrington left. Miss Miller and the District Attorney went down into the cabin and Miss Miller found a seat on one of the wall-benches. The District Attorney poked around the cabin for a time with a flashlight, then went forward. Miss Miller heard his footsteps on the deck overhead and occasionally saw the beam of his light at one of the portholes. After a time he came back.

"Did you find anything, Chief?" she asked.

He nodded positively but grinned when he said: "I found nothing."

"What do you mean?" the girl asked.

"Well," said the District Attorney, "I expected to find some evidence that fishermen had been aboard the boat. This party was out all day, you know, and should have caught something. But there's no evidence of it. As I said, I found nothing . . ."

"And—" Miss Miller prompted.

"Well," said the District Attorney, "I think the eleven men who went with Captain Palmer on his last trip were curious fishermen. I'm beginning to believe that boy had something when he came to see me and I'm more worried than ever about what's happened to him. I was afraid he might continue with his own investigation. And now—"

The D. A. was interrupted by a voice shouting hoarsely from the dock. The fog distorted the sound and the D. A. blinked off the flashlight and blew out the ship's lantern which they had lighted in the cabin. He and Miss Miller came on deck. They laughed when they discovered it was only Har-

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ARMY PEEP carries Ben Bernie (l.) and Gale Robbins from South Bend station to the Bond Victory Fete. At right, the Lads tune up as thousands of South Bend folk throng the public market for the Ben Bernie show



SOUTH BEND warmed to the praise of the distinguished quartet above. L. to r.: Gale Robbins, Governor Schricker, E. C. Pulliam, Ben Bernie



JACK FULTON, left, attacks an inch-thick steak at South Bend's victory dinner party, while Ben Bernie seems startled. Above: Weary troupers roll home to Chicago in the small hours of the morning. L. to r.: George Howard of the King's Jesters, Jack Fulton, Gale Robbins, Yogi Yorgesson

Ben Bernie Leads South Bend's Bond Victory Fete

All-Day Show by the Ol' Maestro and All the Lads Honors a Quota-Busting City

BEN BERNIE believes in giving credit where credit is due. Ben's favorite method of giving credit is to put on a first-class show.

Credit was definitely due to St. Joseph County, Indiana, and to its important city, South Bend. In September, the county led the whole nation in bond sales in September, more than doubling its quota by a drive that produced almost \$3,000,000 worth of sales.

So Ben, Gale Robbins, Jack Fulton, the King's Jesters, Yogi Yorgesson, Jackie Heller and all the Lads went down to South Bend to give the citizens a day crowded with shows of big-time proportions.

Festivities centered around the city's public market, and the Bernie troupe kept the throng happy—and in a buying mood. The Hoosiers bought \$75,000 more in war bonds, receiving coupons good for merchandise equal in value to their bond purchases.

The Ol' Maestro staged his own CBS network show out of doors before a huge audience. He and his troupe also put on three other complete shows in honor of the occasion. Indiana's Governor Henry F. Schricker and State War Savings Administrator Eugene C. Pulliam joined Bernie in praising the fine campaign of the St. Joseph folk.

Yes, Ben believes in giving credit—and here was a case where it was certainly due. Yowsah!



Stork Club



BRUNO

ABSENT for almost a year, Josephine Houston is back on the air in a new Sunday evening show with Wilbur Evans, titled "Stars from the Blue"

RARE TREAT for hat-check gals was Bing Crosby's recent appearance in unfamiliar glad-rags at the Stork Club. Bing's seldom seen at the night-spots



CADET BOMBARDIERS share honors at the microphone with Claudette Colbert on a recent "Soldiers with Wings" broadcast from training-center at Santa Ana. Cadet C. R. Pfeiffer, Jr. (l.), and Cadet W. C. Runner, Jr. (r.)

The Radio Front

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from overseas. He may take his singers along and pick up a band over there, or he may simply broadcast a "spot" bit himself, which would be worked into the rest of the show in the U. S. . . .

I've just been watching the hopefuls trying to storm the gates of network

radio. It has been a rather depressing experience, despite the fact that the hopefuls were treated with courtesy and consideration.

The occasion was a general dramatic audition at the NBC studios here. It was one of the frequent auditions at which anyone is welcome to come and present his talent before the mike.

The hopefuls were all women and children—typical in these war years when many men have grimmer jobs at hand. Most of them were nervous.

They were the people you and I know—the people who recite pieces at church socials, who give "readings" to women's clubs, who act in amateur-theater groups. All of them had some talent; all of them had undoubtedly received the unstinted applause of their friends and encouragement from their elocution teachers and dramatic coaches.

But—and this is the tragedy—most of them are amateurish. To Art Jacobson of NBC and Ted MacMurray of

Blue, directors of the auditions, the gap between this undeveloped talent and professional competence is the difference between possible and impossible. One after another the ladies read poetry and excerpts from plays. They "emoted" energetically, leaped from dialect to dialect, from tragedy to farce. Finally, as an attractive young lady was playing a grandmother bit, Ted turned to me and said, "What I want to see is a nineteen—"

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rington, who had returned from police headquarters with the list of names.

"How many are there?" the D. A. asked, turning on the flashlight.

Harrington counted slowly. There were twelve names.

"Does that mean something, Chief?" Miss Miller asked.

"Yes," he replied, frowning in concentration. "I'm convinced now that young Howell's suspicions were well founded. Remember, he told us that eleven men went along on that party. Well, according to this list, twelve came back. Who was the extra man? Where was he picked up?"

"And now you think the old man was murdered?" Harrington asked.

"No-o-o," the District Attorney said carefully. "But from what we've uncovered, it's pretty evident that he could have been."

"But what'll we do now?"

The District Attorney thought a moment, then said, "Well, we're pretty certain that young Howell was making his own investigation. The last thing he told me was that he might check on the passenger list. I told him not to, but you could hardly blame him for following up something he started. The thing to do now is to find him. We'll divide the list, each take four names.

I want you both to try to see your people personally. Tell them that the boy was to meet you there. Watch their reactions closely . . . We'll meet back here in an hour."

"Right, Chief," said Harrington.

"Okay," Miss Miller replied.

"I have a feeling that the roll of film the boy told me about is the key to this case. We've got to find him before it's too late."

The first three names on Miss Miller's list were blanks. She found no houses at two of the addresses and the third address was a darkened warehouse. She was keyed up and excited when she discovered that the fourth address was that of a small camera shop. An attendant, a raw-boned blond youth, was closing up for the night.

He replied courteously when Miss Miller asked if the place was Mr. Ludlow's shop, but shuffled his feet nervously when she said that she had come there to meet a friend of hers named Howell. She asked the young man if he was Mr. Ludlow.

"No," the fellow replied. "Mr. Ludlow's busy at the moment. What was your friend going to see him about?"

"He wanted to find out something from him. I do hope he hasn't been here and gone."

The attendant said he wouldn't know about that, and explained that he was about to close the shop; that it would be impossible for Miss Miller to wait. At that moment, however, a

door at the rear of the shop opened and a man with a deep scar on one cheek came into the shop. His voice was soft and pleasant. He was a tall, well-dressed man about thirty-five, who introduced himself as Mr. Ludlow, and said he had overheard the conversation with his clerk.

"It's not comfortable in the front of the store," he said casually. "Suppose you come in the back room and wait."

Miss Miller hesitated, but Mr. Ludlow called for the clerk, whom he addressed as "Paul," to close the shop. Miss Miller knew that if anything was wrong, the District Attorney and Harrington would find her eventually. But how long would she have to wait? Was it important that she follow Mr. Ludlow?

A moment later she knew the truth. As she stepped into the back room, Mr. Ludlow dropped his polite manner. He pointed to the far corner of the room.

"There is your young man," he said. "Oh," cried Miss Miller in horror as her eyes followed Ludlow's pointing finger. The Howell boy lay on the floor, strangely doubled up. His hands and legs were tied and his eyes were closed.

"Don't be startled," Ludlow said. "He's merely unconscious. He's quite comfortable there on the floor. His condition is merely the result of stubbornness. He wanted to know too much about a roll of film my men dropped on his uncle's boat."

"Why don't you do something for him?"

"I'm going to," said Ludlow in a guttural voice. "I'm going to do something for both of you."

Miss Miller noted the change in the man's voice, the almost German accent that had crept into it. Ludlow asked what she was doing in his shop. She recognized her danger and tried to stall for time. Mentally, she tried to calculate how long she had been gone and how long it would take Harrington and the Chief to get back to the boat, where they had planned to meet. She attempted to hide her mental distress from Ludlow and explained that young Howell was merely her sweetheart with whom she had a date for the evening. Ludlow wasn't fooled.

"I enjoy listening to a convincing liar," he said, smirking. "You are asking me to believe that an obviously cosmopolitan young lady like yourself is the sweetheart of this country oaf." Ludlow turned to Paul, who also had entered the small room. "Relieve the young lady of her handbag, please," he ordered.

Paul snatched the bag from Miss Miller's hands. Ludlow told him to look inside for identification papers. In that way they discovered that she was from the D. A.'s office.

"I thought so," Ludlow said. "The boy has been in touch with the District Attorney. Since he is missing, they

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have started to look for him. Now they will look for her, too. We must work more swiftly than I anticipated. Is the boat ready?"

"Yes, it is tied to the dock below."

Miss Miller tried to talk fast, but to no avail. She broke away and tried to reach the shop door. Ludlow snapped an order to Paul—and he talked in German!

"So that's what this racket's all about," Miss Miller said. "A couple of Hitler's little stooges!"

Ludlow smirked and made a low, mocking bow. "Very effective ones, my dear," he said. "We are little stooges who have an objective and we are going to carry it out! I don't mind telling you now what it is. After all—you might as well know about your journey. It's going to be a one-way passage anyway."

"Really?" Miss Miller asked, stalling for time.

"Yes," Ludlow replied. "My assistant is delivering a very important package to a U-boat that is awaiting his arrival out at sea. The last time we took on another agent."

"That's how you used the fishing-boat? That accounts for the twelfth man in your party."

"This time we are using a much speedier craft. We do not fear pursuers, because it will not be necessary for the boat to return."

"And we're supposed to swim back, is that it?" the girl asked.

"You won't be able to swim," Ludlow snapped. "You'll both be unconscious and young Howell there—" he nodded toward the unconscious boy—"has accidentally broken his arm."

Miss Miller looked at Ludlow and saw the cruel grin. Abruptly she knew the truth. Captain Palmer had met with no accident. These men had pushed his arm into a boat's engine and then let him bleed to death so that the whole thing looked like an accident. Now they had broken the boy's arm trying to torture the truth from



BILL HOWELL'S clew leads Mr. D. A. to Nazi spy ring. Clifford Carpenter portrays role of Bill



VETERAN of radio crime dramas is Alan Devitt, who portrays the role of vicious Nazi helper, Paul



PETER CAPPELL plays the part of Ludlow, Hitler stooge who is forced to match wits with Mr. D. A.

him. For the first time she began to fear for her own life. Where was the Chief?

Ludlow gave quick orders to Paul in guttural German. Paul went to a drawer and produced a Luger pistol. Ludlow dragged the unconscious Howell boy across the floor. After he had the boy aboard the slim, speedy craft below, he came back to the room and spoke again to Paul.

"I will go to the tower, now," he said. "When I see your boat clear the harbor, I will flash the signal out to sea. You will take care of these two?"

Paul saluted and Ludlow left by the front door of the shop. Paul approached Miss Miller with the gun. She dodged him around the table, knowing that he was afraid to fire a shot for fear of bringing police. She still had to stall for time. Paul, she knew, meant to knock her unconscious, then drag her aboard the boat. Paul seized her arm and raised the butt of the gun . . . the door of the small room suddenly burst open.

The Chief fired one shot. Paul's arm

dropped uselessly to his side. The Luger clattered across the floor.

"Thanks, Chief," said Miss Miller calmly, though she felt more like fainting. "This is a Nazi spy set-up, Chief."

Quickly she explained how Ludlow had headed for some sort of tower to signal to an enemy submarine out at sea. The Chief, who knew the district like an old-timer, guessed quickly that the "tower" could mean only the Sailor's Memorial Tower, which was the only tall building in the small fishing-village. Despite their haste, they found Ludlow just as he signaled.

He put up no fight and openly boasted that he'd sent the signal in time and that his mission had been carried out successfully.

"Yes," said the D. A. dryly, "but your confederate isn't in it. The boat that left the harbor was a decoy, Ludlow, a decoy that revealed the position of your submarine. Listen—there's an inshore wind tonight—I think we'll hear something."

The three men and Miss Miller stood in the wind-swept tower, and suddenly, on the wind which had blown the fog from the harbor, came a dull booming sound from the darkened sea.

Ludlow dampened his dry lips with his tongue. "What's happening out there?" he asked.

The District Attorney smiled. "Our bombing planes appear to have contacted the U-boat," he said.

"Yeah," Harrington said with a grin, "and to use the words of our American heroes, it sounds to me like, 'Sighted sub, sank same!'"

This thrilling story was adapted from the famous radio show "Mr. District Attorney." "Mr. District Attorney," authored by Ed Byron and Jerry Devine, may be heard Wednesdays over NBC at 9:30 p.m. EWT, 8:30 p.m. CWT, 7:30 p.m. MWT and 6:30 p.m. PWT under the sponsorship of Bristol-Myers Company in behalf of their products, Vitalis and Ingram's Shaving Cream.

War in the Air

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sea-power, as compared with the United Nations, that it may justly be regarded as wholly lacking this element. Britain and its allies have a monopoly of surface strength at sea all around Europe. Yet the fact remains that sea forces cannot approach the Continent, because it is girded with land-based Axis aviation. If ever we do invade that continent it will be because we have neutralized or knocked out the defending Axis air-power.

What has the struggle in the Pacific been, when viewed from the revealing perspective of aviation, but a race for

air bases? Japan has carried her air-power from island to island, the range of its aviation determining the extent of every surge forward. On the several occasions when Japan ventured beyond the range of its land-based aviation—in the battles of Coral Sea and Midway Island, for instance—and into the orbit of our land-based air-power, it has been defeated. The struggle in the southwest Pacific takes its name mostly from land groups, such as the Solomon and the Midway Islands, but always it is a struggle for air bases, in which the outcome is decided by conflict in the skies. Indeed, none of these battles can be understood except in relation to mastery of the skies, and anchor points on the surface for that canopy

of aerial domination.

The whole war, in sober fact, can no longer be judged by this or that battle, or measured in square miles of land or sea. It is in the first place a struggle for ascendancy in the skies, and that on a global rather than on a local scale. Air-power has upset every old rule of war-making. It is in the process of evolving strategies and techniques of its own, to which all surface strategies become secondary and subordinate. There are no books from which this can be learned—the unfolding war itself is the book, and only those familiar with the language of aviation can hope to read it with some approximation of accuracy and to interpret its meaning for the future. There is no

skirmish or battle which does not require judgment and interpretation from the angle of aviation.

These are a few of the manifold reasons why the war events must be analyzed by airmen, must be seen in relation to the three-dimensional realities. The war in the air is not just a phase of the larger war. This is primarily an air war. Victory and defeat will be determined, in the final analysis, by the respective aerial potentials of the contending nations.

Major Alexander P. de Seversky, of the U. S. Army Air Forces, recently completed a thirteen-week series of commentaries on "War in the Air" over NBC.

The Radio Front

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year-old girl who can act like a nineteen-year-old girl. They come here and try to do every kind of part—except the natural one. Straight stuff is the hardest thing to do."

Finally a little boy stood at the mike, sure of himself, steady, one eye cocked on Grandma by the sidelines. He read pretty well, had some punch in the right places. "We'll try him," said Art, and Ted nodded agreement. "He's no sensation, but he's

worth calling in for a special audition. He might handle small parts."

And that was all. Without comment or criticism the directors led the hopefuls out, told them to call in a few days. Those calls, when they came, would mean dashed hopes for all but the little boy. For him it would mean a chance to appear in another audition before all the directors of the local NBC organization. If they approve of him, he will be placed on the talent lists and may be called to audition for particular roles in particular shows. If he wins a bit part, he will be privileged to join the hun-

dreds of people in Chicago radio who wait by the phone or in the studio lobbies for the breaks that might carry them to fame and fortune—those breaks that so very, very seldom come, even to actors with long experience on the air . . .

Les Mitchell, director of "Helen Trent," said his "I dos" to lovely Madelon Grayson, actress and model, on October 9 in the study of Preston Bradley, popular radio minister and commentator. Couple met last New Year's, when Les cast Madelon for a part in a radio show. Virginia Clark

(Helen Trent) gave the Mitchells a reception after the ceremony. All of which verifies a romantic footnote on Les and Madelon which this column carried some weeks ago. Les is recently divorced . . .

Gale Robbins of the Bernie show, signed by Paramount, leaves us shortly . . . Blue ran a double feature out of Great Lakes Naval Training Station t'other night. "Spotlight Bands" led off. With only a five-minute break, "Meet Your Navy" took over . . . Joe Ainley is the new director of "Guiding Light."